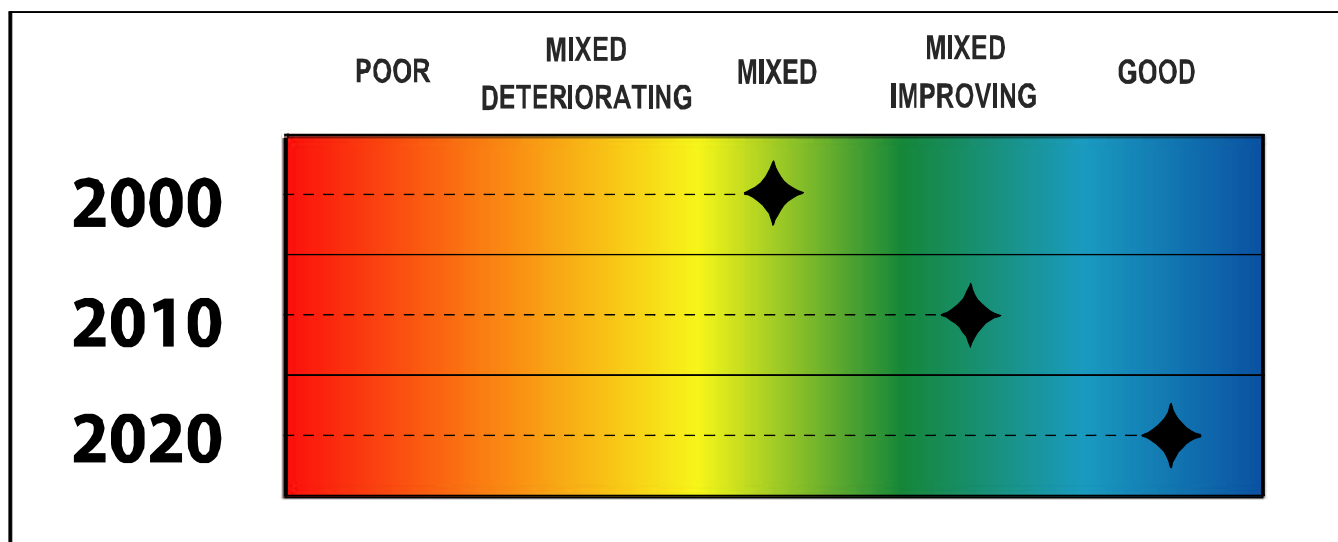


Subgoal 5

Does the public have access to abundant open space, shoreline, and natural areas, and does the public have enhanced opportunities for interaction with the Lake Michigan ecosystem?



Status

Currently, the status of the goal is mixed due to the competing needs of the public and the ecosystem. To move to mixed/improving status by 2010 and finally to good status by 2020, there is a need to find a better balance between public access and ecosystem protection. The Lake Michigan LaMP focuses on the health of the Lake Michigan ecosystem, so management actions implemented under the LaMP are to take an ecosystem approach to remediation and protection. The 1994 SOLEC Integration Paper developed by EPA and Environment Canada states that "Governments have traditionally addressed human activities on a piecemeal basis, separating decision making on environmental quality from decision making on natural resource management or on social or economic issues.... An ecosystem approach to management is a holistic approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of and addresses the linkages occurring among air, water, land, and living things."

Challenges

- Public involvement in preservation and stewardship of special natural areas with public access for sport and recreational activities should be fostered by the following:
- Broaden the dialogue with state and local government land-use planners and decision-makers to balance environmental and recreational needs.
- Provide tools for local communities to understand the value of the resource and develop long-term management programs.
- Identify open space multi-use opportunities.

Public Interaction with the Lake Michigan Watershed

According to the Federal Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force, an ecosystem is defined as: "... an interconnected community of living things, including humans, and the physical environment with which they interact. As such, ecosystems form the cornerstones of sustainable

economies. The goal of the ecosystem approach is to restore and maintain the health, sustainability, and biological diversity of ecosystems while supporting sustainable economies and communities" (1995). Based on a collaboratively developed vision of desired future conditions, the ecosystem approach integrates ecological, economic, and social factors that affect a management unit defined by ecological—not political—boundaries. The foundation of the ecosystem approach is relating human beings and their activities to the ecosystems that contain them.

As access to Lake Michigan increases, so does the pressure for development. Growth of summer homes and year-round homes on the shoreline leads to more road construction, pollution from increased use of automobiles, and human use of areas that interrupts the natural web of basin life. In response, Smart Growth policies are being developed and pursued by many communities, and resources such as the "Wisconsin Planning Guide for Smart Growth" (see www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/science/landuse/smart_growth/index.htm for more information) and the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission's "Environmental Considerations in Comprehensive Planning: A Manual for Local Officials" (see www.nipc.org for more information) are becoming more widely available.

Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

Outdoor recreation in the Great Lakes basin is an important component of the region's economy. The region offers outstanding tourism and recreational opportunities ranging from wilderness activities in pristine national parks to swimming at beaches in major cities. A well-defined four-season climate supports many types of recreation ranging from ice fishing, skiing, and snowmobiling in the winter to golf, fishing, boating, and swimming in the summer. There are approximately 40 state parks in or near the Lake Michigan basin as well as a large number of national lakeshore parks and fish and wildlife refuges. These can be visited by following the Circle Tour route around Lake Michigan. The Great Lakes Commission, in cooperation with the Great Lakes states and provinces in the 1980s and 1990s, coordinated the

Northwest Indiana Mayors Join to Re-Make Indiana Lakeshore

The mayors of East Chicago, Gary, Hammond, Portage, and Whiting, Indiana signed a memorandum of understanding to collectively pursue a master plan for the Lake Michigan shoreline. Each city contributed \$8,000 to secure a \$160,000 matching grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to pay for the plan's development. The "Marquette Greenway Plan" involves a transformation of Northwest Indiana's lakeshore, covering about 45 miles from the state line at Hammond to the eastern edge of Portage from industrial to public use.

The master plan will provide the cities with a detailed map analysis and evaluation of the shoreline and its potential for public recreational use. The key elements of the plan include recapturing 75 percent of the shoreline for public use, a minimum 200-foot setback from the shoreline for all new structures and facilities and a continuous pedestrian/bicycle trail along the shore.

The partnership is the culmination of a vision first proposed by Indiana Representative Peter Visclosky.

Crandon Mine Site Purchased by Tribes

Twenty-eight years of opposition to restart the proposed Crandon mine in northeastern Wisconsin came to an end in October 2003 when two Native communities next to the site, the Forest County Potawatomi and the Mole Lake Sokaogon Chippewa (Ojibwe), paid \$16.5 million for a 5,000-acre mine site. Mole Lake now owns the Nicolet Minerals Company.

Exxon Coal and Minerals Company discovered a deposit located in Forest County during the mid-1970's through geophysical reconnaissance and an extensive exploration drilling program. Nicolet Minerals Company proposed to develop the ore body.

Many in the area opposed the proposed mine because it was upstream of many wetlands, Ojibwe wild rice beds, Native burial sites, and prized trout, walleye and sturgeon in the Wolf River. The Wolf River is also prized for both its smooth and white water canoe opportunities.

Many who opposed the mine hope tribal ownership will result in open space and habitat protection for the area.

Proposed Lake Michigan Water Trail

The creation of Great Lakes automobile and bike trails around Lake Michigan and the creation of several water trails around the lake has led to discussions of linking the emerging water trails into a larger system of water trails by the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) and LaMP committees.

The Lake Michigan Water Trail program would encourage coordination among lakefront communities to develop a water trail segment that links their communities and provide a safe, educational, and legal access experience to Lake Michigan. Water trail creation brings together a broad coalition of interested groups including public land managing entities, self-powered boating interests, environmental and historical groups, private property owners, tourism offices, and physical activity advocates. The Rivers and Trails Program of the NPS will provide technical assistance to communities who wish to participate in water trail development.

Rivers and Trails staff has a history of assisting communities around the country in water trail development. In each of these projects, Rivers and Trails staff serve as convener, facilitator, coordinator, and technical advisor on the design, research, marketing, and, oftentimes, all of the above. NPS staff assisted in developing water trails in Chesapeake Bay, Florida's waterways, Puget Sound, San Francisco Bay, the Great Lakes and numerous rivers in between. In the Great Lakes, NPS Wisconsin staff assisted in developing three water trails in Lake Superior (one in each state of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan), one in Lake Huron, and are currently embarking on one in northwestern Lake Michigan.

Creating a water trail on the northwest shore of Lake Michigan raises the challenge of how to link with an existing water trail segment on Lake Michigan's southwest shore and to expand around the lake. Spearheaded by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission, Openlands Project, and the Illinois Paddling Council, the Northeastern Illinois Regional Water Trails Plan was developed in 2002 and includes the Lake Michigan shore from Indiana to Wisconsin.

For more information, contact Angie Tornes at angie_tornes@nps.gov.



**Follow the
Circle Tour
signs!**

creation of the Circle Tours along existing roadways. The Lake Michigan Circle Tour route is marked by signs that feature Lake Michigan and the four surrounding states. In addition, guides prepared by states and localities that highlight enjoyable areas are important tools for promoting public access as well as critical ecosystem protection.

The eight Great Lakes states have about 3.7 million registered recreational boats, or about a third of the nation's total. Michigan leads the nation in the

number of boat registrations and six Great Lakes states rank in the nation's top ten in total registrations. The commercial and sport fishing industry in the Great Lakes basin is valued at more than \$4 billion annually.

The Benefits of Open Space

Open space plays an important role in supporting the economy. According to the National Association of State Park Directors, use of geologically or environmentally sensitive areas as open space or for recreational purposes can reduce potential property damage costs. Hazards that can be mitigated through conservation of open space include flooding, slope instability, and structural fire damage. The combination of habitat protection and recreation is often the highest and best use of lands that are too fragile for development. The cost of not protecting such assets as slopes, aquifers, woodlots, wetlands, fens, alvars, floodways is incredibly high in the long run.

Coastal Zone Management Programs

The Coastal Zone Management Program is a national initiative, administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that focuses on balancing the economic prosperity and environmental health of the nation's coasts. Participation in the Coastal Zone Management Program will make over \$900,000 available annually to achieve the goals of the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program. The following information is on recent developments in Indiana and Illinois. Michigan and Wisconsin, which have had coastal zone programs for many years also participate in the program.

Indiana

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has completed the development process for the Lake Michigan Coastal Program, including a framework for Indiana's participation in the Coastal Zone Management Program in 2002. The Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program was developed to enhance the State's role in planning for and managing natural and cultural resources in the coastal region and to support partnerships between federal, state and local government agencies and organizations. The Lake Michigan Coastal Program is based on a network approach that uses existing state laws and programs. It is a new tool to implement existing programs and to provide funding for unique or under-funded projects.

The Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program will, through grants and partnerships with local communities, support activities that achieve the following goals in the coastal region:

- Protect and restore significant natural resources;
- Prevent the loss of life and property in coastal hazard areas;
- Improve public access for recreational purposes;
- Protect and restore important historic and cultural resources;
- Improve government coordination and policy and decision making;
- Prevent, reduce, or remediate nonpoint source pollution that affects coastal waters;
- Revitalize urban waterfronts and ports; and
- Provide for priority water dependent uses.

An extensive effort was made to continue public involvement during the development of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program.

In 2004, eleven projects were selected to be funded, totaling \$1.158 million. This is down slightly from the 2003 awards of \$1.171 million. Initial reports indicate that 2005 awards will be lower than the 2004. The initial Presidential budget requests \$4.6 M less for Coastal Grant Programs than the 2004 appropriation. This reduction would most likely be spread out among all 34 participating Coastal State or territories.

Illinois

In January 2004, the Illinois Conservation Congress passed a recommendation that Illinois investigate participation in the National Coastal Zone Management Program. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has the recommendation under review.

Next Steps

- Partner with the growing coastal zone management programs in the Lake Michigan basin to ensure that the issue of public access to the lake is balanced with protection of the ecosystem
- Identify the need for additional facilities and access points (such as boat ramps canoe, and bicycle and walking trails around Lake Michigan).
- Expand the Northeastern Illinois water trail to other regions and states around Lake Michigan in partnership with National Park Service state and local organizations.